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Monday, December 17, 2007

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McLaughlin Research Institute Receives \$2 Million Biomedical Research Grant from the Montana Department of Commerce

(HELENA) – Today Governor Brian Schweitzer presented a \$2 million biomedical research grant from the Montana Department of Commerce to the McLaughlin Research Institute in Great Falls. The grant will allow the McLaughlin Institute to expand its genetic research aimed at improving human health, expand its research facility and team, and provide additional educational opportunities to high school and college students and teachers.

“The McLaughlin Research Institute is a world class facility, doing cutting edge research right in our own back yard,” said Governor Brian Schweitzer. “This grant is an investment in Montana’s future doctors and scientists, and research that has the potential to revolutionize our understanding of serious disease.”

McLaughlin has a history of genetics research and education in Great Falls that spans over 50 years. By working with mice, genetically altered to express human genes, scientists are accomplishing groundbreaking research on serious diseases like Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, and chronic brain wasting disease in both humans and animals.

“The potential for our research to improve human health will increase significantly with this funding,” said McLaughlin Director Dr. George Carlson. “This grant will allow us to expand our facility and increase our research and educational capabilities. We are very grateful.”

About 80 percent of students who train at McLaughlin go on to careers in scientific research or medicine and the majority of these students are from Montana.

“Economic development is a byproduct of McLaughlin’s work,” said Department of Commerce Director Anthony Preite. “McLaughlin’s scientists secure funds from outside Montana to support their research and staff, and look within Montana for students, equipment and supplies.”

McLaughlin scientists are currently researching the agents that cause bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in livestock and chronic wasting disease in deer and elk. Scientists are trying to better understand these diseases, and are working on developing a method to detect their presence before symptoms develop. This research could provide tremendous benefit to Montana’s livestock and game industries.

Funding for the grant was made possible through the steadfast efforts of Great Falls area legislators and strong support from Governor Schweitzer. The 2007 Montana Legislature appropriated the funds to the Montana Department of Commerce. The McLaughlin Institute will leverage the \$2 million dollar grant from the state with \$2 million dollars of additional funding.

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